



# Loudoun County Health Department

*"Working to ensure and improve the health  
of the residents of Loudoun County"*



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## Spotlight on Our Staff...

### Doug Hubbard

#### Coordinator of Technical Assistance 24 Years with the Health Department

Doug Hubbard has been very busy tracking the West Nile Virus in Loudoun County. Doug reports that the emergence of a new vector borne disease, such as the West Nile Virus, puts the Health Department staff in a unique position. Not only are the staff learning about and tracking the progress of the virus but, at the same time, they are working to educate our community. Doug finds it challenging for the staff to assure that the information the Health Department passes along to the public is accurate, timely, and easily understood.

Reflecting on the public's need to know, Doug noted that the Environmental Health staff receive many calls regarding the West Nile Virus, mosquitoes, and information the public inquires about, including web sites they can use to gather additional information. Giving the caller or resident information that is relevant to his or her situation helps to remove fears or anxiety they may have regarding the disease. It also gives them the opportunity to "do something" to protect themselves.

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## What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause encephalitis (brain inflammation) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) in humans and other animals. The virus came by its name because it was first isolated in the West Nile River region of Uganda in Africa in 1937. The first report of West Nile Virus in the United States was in New York in 1999 where it claimed seven lives.

### Most people bitten by a mosquito infected with the West Nile Virus do not get sick.

West Nile Virus was first identified in Loudoun County in August of last year. Thirty-five dead birds have been tested and found positive for the virus. Douglas Hubbard, Coordinator of Technical Assistance for the Health Department's Environmental Section, reported that the infected birds and mosquitoes were found throughout Loudoun County.

### How is the West Nile Virus Spread?

West Nile Virus is spread to humans, birds, and other animals through bites by mosquitoes infected as a result of biting birds that carry the virus. The virus is not spread from person to person through normal contact. However, there have been several reports of blood transfusions and organ transplants infected with West Nile Virus.

As of September 25, 2002, 13 Virginians have been diagnosed with West Nile Virus, including a 54-year-old Sterling resident who died from her infection. Although the West Nile Virus has been identified in Loudoun County, only a small proportion of mosquitoes are likely to be infected.

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## West Nile Virus Symptoms

Symptoms of West Nile Virus usually show up from 3 to 6 days after an infected mosquito bites an individual.

People over the age of 50 and persons whose immune systems are compromised due to severe illnesses are at greater risk for severe infection.

**Mild infection symptoms** may include a slight fever, headache, body aches, swollen glands, and sometimes a skin rash.

**Severe infection symptoms** may include a high fever, intense headache, stiff neck, and confusion.

### Concerned that you have been infected?

You do not need to see a doctor if bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people recover from the virus rapidly and require no treatment.

For persons who experience severe symptoms, testing for the West Nile Virus requires a blood test or a spinal fluid test that can take several weeks to confirm a diagnosis. No vaccine exists to prevent or treat persons infected with West Nile Virus.

### What can I do to protect myself against West Nile Virus?

Taking common sense steps to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes is the best way to stay safe from West Nile. Use insect repellent with no more than 20-30% DEET for adults and less than 10% for children. DEET is the commercial product name for an insect repellent (N N-diethyl-meta-toulamide). DEET was approved for use by the general population in 1957 and has been widely used since then.

Mosquitoes infected with the West Nile Virus are most active in the early morning and late evening hours. The risk of contracting mosquito borne diseases is higher in summer and early fall until the first frost. Until such time, use repellents and dress in long sleeves and long pants when outside.

## Two Cases of Malaria Reported

Two cases of malaria infection were confirmed in early September in the Cascades-Sugarland Run area of Loudoun County. Both of the infected individuals have recovered.

Malaria is a sometimes serious disease caused by a parasite and spread by infected mosquitoes. People infected with malaria can be easily cured with prescription drugs when treated by a doctor.

Malaria is considered rare in the continental United States, but the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that over a thousand cases of people infected abroad are diagnosed each year in the continental United States.

## Malaria Symptoms

Malaria symptoms may include fever, a flu-like illness, shaking, chills, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Symptoms appear within 1 to 2 weeks of exposure.

## Protection Tips for Mosquito Borne Diseases

- Use repellent containing DEET on exposed skin.
- Wear long pants & long sleeved shirts for outdoor activities.
- Fix window screens or keep them closed at night and in the early morning hours.
- Remove containers where rainwater collects.
- Empty bird baths at least once a week.
- Remove old tires from your yard.
- Drain wading pools often.
- Clean roof gutters & downspout screens.
- Eliminate standing water on flat roofs.
- Do not allow water to collect in garbage cans.

**Call the Loudoun County Health Department for more information at (703) 777-0234**

# Total Woman Cancer Screening Day – October 23

For the last eight years in Loudoun County, the Health Department, the American Cancer Society, and Loudoun County physicians, family nurse practitioners, and nurses have joined forces to take women's health protection against cancers several significant steps further than addressing breast cancer alone. October 23<sup>rd</sup> marks our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual *Total Woman's Cancer Screening Day*.

The screenings are free of charge to women who meet the following requirements:

- ✓ 40 years of age or older.
- ✓ Reside in Loudoun County.
- ✓ Do not have health insurance or
- ✓ Health insurance deductible does not cover cost of screening services or
- ✓ Health insurance does not cover the screening services.
- ✓ Who do not receive Medicaid.
- ✓ Annual household income meets the guidelines below:

Household Size	Yearly Household Income
1 Person	\$17,720 & below
2 Persons	\$23,880 & below
3 Persons	\$30,040 & below
4 Persons	\$36,200 & below
5 Persons	\$42,360 & below

The screening will include breast and cervical examinations, a Pap Smear, Colon/Rectal screening, and a referral for a free mammogram when indicated. Representatives from the American Cancer Society will conduct a training session to show women how they can perform a monthly self-breast examination.

The screenings will be performed at the Loudoun County Public Health Clinic located at 102 Heritage Way NE in Leesburg (in the Wal-Mart Plaza). Screenings are by appointment only. Call the Loudoun County Health Department Clinic for an appointment.

**(703) 771-5824**

## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month– Are you at risk?

The American Cancer Society reports that breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women. It accounts for over 30% of all cancers diagnosed in women. Roughly 190,000 plus American women will develop breast cancer this year and 40,000 will die as a result. The number of breast cancer deaths can be significantly reduced if women, aged 40 and over, would have an annual mammogram, a breast examination by a physician, and by learning how to perform a monthly self-breast exam.

Risk by Age Group	Risk Estimates
30 Years of age	1 in 2,525
40 Years of age	1 in 217
50 Years of age	1 in 50
60 Years of age	1 in 24
70 Years of age	1 in 14
80 years of age	1 in 10

(Sources) National Cancer Institute & American Cancer Society

## FLU IS BACK! ARE YOU READY?

The flu (influenza) is not just a cold or a runny nose. It can lead to pneumonia and other serious outcomes. The flu can be particularly dangerous to several age and risk groups. People over 50, children with asthma, nursing home residents, persons with serious illnesses such as diabetes, heart, and lung disease, and healthcare workers are particularly at risk for being hospitalized if they get the flu.

Contact your health provider, doctor, or the Loudoun County Health Department to find out where and when you can get a flu shot. The Health Department offers flu and pneumonia shots at the Health Clinic (102 Heritage Way NE in Leesburg) to the public on a walk-in basis for a nominal fee. Flu vaccines should be available by the first week in October.

**For information call the Loudoun County Health  
Department Clinic  
(703) 777-0236**

## **Environmental Services Provided by the Loudoun County Health Department Environmental Division**

Environmental Health performs a variety of functions, all of which are designed to prevent human illnesses transmitted through the environment. Programs include surveillance and inspection of food services, hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, daycare, childcare, adult care, jails, swimming pools, and public and private schools. Complaints are investigated in response to a wide variety of environmental health concerns. More recently, environmental health has been increasingly active in vector control in response to West Nile virus and Malaria, both transmitted by mosquitoes.

Environmental Health provides a wide range of services related to drinking water protection and wastewater disposal. All newly proposed development sites planned for wells and onsite sewage disposal are evaluated for compliance with state and county regulations. When approvable, construction permits are issued and inspections are conducted during construction, and operation permits are issued. New development reviews are coordinated with Planning, Building and Development and others.

Environmental Health enforces the County's ordinance regulating the land application of biosolids and provides staff support to the County's technical committee on biosolids.

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### **Health Department Information**

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Environmental Health Division (703) 777-0234

1 Harrison Street, SE, Leesburg 20177

Health Clinic

(703) 777-0236

102 Heritage Way, Leesburg 20176

To find out more about the services provided by the Loudoun County Health Department, please visit our web site on the internet at:

<http://www.loudoun.gov/depts/health.htm>

### **Environmental Services – (Continued)**

Environmental surveys are conducted to address other environmental problems in existing communities such as failing septic systems, water supplies, insect and rodent control. Free information and assistance is provided on indoor air pollution and radon test kits are available.

Environmental Health services are mandated by State and County laws, regulations and ordinances. Most of these services carry user fees which offset State and local tax funding requirements. Fee schedules, lists of approved well and septic contractors and soil consultants are available at the Environmental Health front desk (703) 777-0234.